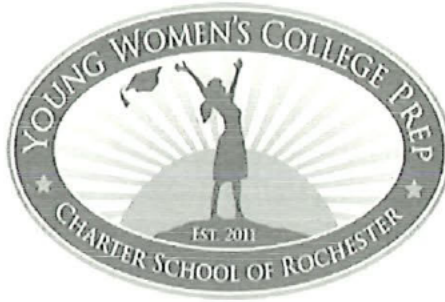


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MEMORANDUM

TO: Barbara Zelazny, School Principal

FROM: Jennifer Allen, Chair
Board of Trustees

DATE: March 10, 2022

SUBJECT: March 1, 2022 Meeting

This memorandum shall confirm the March 1, 2022 meeting between you and the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees. At that time, we discussed the Board's concerns regarding the current state of the School. The Board's concerns arise, in part, from the factual findings of two, out of three, independent investigations which have been conducted on staff conduct since November 2021.

The concerns discussed during the March 1, 2022 meeting are detailed below. As discussed, the Board expects to see immediate improvement in these areas.

I. Staff supervision and discipline

The January 2022 investigation found that at least two YWCP employees advised you of their concerns regarding the interactions of the teacher at issue in the investigation with the student, but you failed to take prompt action to investigate such concerns. The investigation also found you were aware that this particular teacher had taken students on a weekend fishing trip in November 2021, and although it was not a School-sponsored event, you "approved and encouraged this type of contact with students." The investigation also noted that you were aware that this trip was the cause for a COVID-19 quarantine, and that you believed the teacher had acted irresponsibly but did not take disciplinary action against him, or otherwise speak to him about the matter.

Again, these findings were a significant cause of concern for the Board, particularly given the investigation's ultimate findings related to the interactions between the teacher and student, which suggested an inappropriate relationship. As the School Principal, you are YWCP's instructional and building leader and the ultimate supervisor for all YWCP staff. As such, you are expected to: (i) listen to staff concerns, especially those related to potential inappropriate relationships between a staff member and a student; and (ii) take prompt investigatory, remedial and/or disciplinary action to address all staff issues. The failure to do so can have significant consequences for YWCP, its staff and students.

The Board also wishes to have a more detailed conversation with you regarding the School's policy and expectations regarding staff and student interactions, particularly those outside of the classroom. The three independent investigations conducted since November 2021 have demonstrated the significant issues that can arise as a result of perceived inappropriate interactions between staff and students. To best protect YWCP, its staff and students, it is important that the Board and School leadership share the same expectations regarding staff and student interactions, that such expectations are clearly communicated to staff, and that they are consistently enforced.

II. Policy enforcement

The January 2022 and February 2022 investigations also found that you failed to enforce YWCP's current policy on transporting students. The investigations confirm that you are aware the policy is being violated and have not taken steps to address such violations. During our March 1, 2022 meeting, you indicated there is an issue with student transportation which necessitates staff transporting students in their personal vehicles.

This is another major concern of the Board. The January 2022 investigation noted that violations of YWCP's transportation policy puts the School and its teachers at risk and the Board agrees with that finding. Staff driving students in their personal vehicles places everyone at risk – the School, the staff member and the student. Putting aside the obvious risks, allowing or encouraging staff to transport students can create avoidable situations like the one that, in part, necessitated the February 2022 investigation – well-intentioned acts by staff being misinterpreted as inappropriate behavior.

As School Principal, you are expected to: (i) enforce the School's policies; (ii) promptly and proactively identify issues and risks to the School, its staff and students; (iii) promptly advise the Board of those issues and/or risks; and (iv) seek out solutions which do not subject staff and students to avoidable risks. A more detailed conversation regarding student transportation must take place to effectively address the transportation issue you identified during our meeting. Until such solution is implemented, however, you are expected to enforce the School's transportation policy.

III. Staff communications

The January 2022 investigation also found that some employees are hesitant to raise concerns or issues to you. This appears to be due, in part, to a feeling that you will not take any action in response. The Board is separately aware that some staff feel you are not as communicative or present as a School Principal should be in order to be effective and to project engaged leadership. Staff have also described you as being unresponsive at times, and at other times dismissive and quick to delegate necessary communication to other employees.

The past two years have been challenging for all educators and morale has been impacted as a result. However, as School Principal it is critical that you identify and try to rectify staff morale issues. You are also expected to foster an environment where staff feel that the School Principal is

accessible and engaged in addressing staff concerns, particularly those that relate to YWCP students.

IV. Board communications and relations

The Board is also concerned about its relationship with you. As School Principal you report to the Board and are expected to work collaboratively with the Board to ensure the School's success. This includes meeting with the full Board, the Board Chair and the Education Committee to ensure open communication and productive conversations related to the School's operations.

The Board's expectations regarding open communication and collaboration have not been met. Collaborative discussions have also not taken place with the Education Committee. You can be defensive in conversations with Board members and it was reported that on one occasion you got upset during an Education Committee videoconference meeting, turned off your camera and refused to engage in productive conversation. (You engaged in similar behavior during the March 1, 2022 meeting.) Although you were reasonably expected to initiate communication with the Board about the January 2022 and February 2022 investigations, you failed to do so and directed the Director of Operations to provide updates. Accordingly, the communication and collaboration between the Board and you must immediately improve.

During the March 1, 2022 meeting you indicated you had concerns regarding communicating with the Board and were unclear as to whom to direct questions and concerns. While you noted you were unprepared to talk about these matters during the March 1, 2022 meeting, such concerns or questions are to be raised to the Executive Committee for further group discussion.

V. Summary of Directives/Expectations

A summary of the directives and expectations noted above follows: (i) listen to staff concerns, especially those related to potential inappropriate relationships between a staff member and a student, and take prompt investigatory, remedial and/or disciplinary action to address staff issues; (ii) consistently enforce the School's policies; (iii) promptly and proactively identify issues and risks to the School, its staff and students, advise the Board of those issues and/or risks, and seek out solutions which do not subject staff and students to avoidable risks; (iv) identify and seek to rectify staff morale issues; (v) foster an environment in which staff feel that the School Principal is accessible and engaged in addressing staff concerns and management of day-to-day operations; and (vi) improve communication and collaboration between the Board and yourself.

Again, the Board's concerns are significant and there needs to be immediate improvement in the areas addressed above. If you have any questions regarding the Board's expectations, please feel free to contact the Executive Committee.